

I was appalled to hear about Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election. As a former journalist with 10 years of experience in newspaper reporting and writing, I'm very conscious of the need to present both sides of an issue to a media outlet's readership or viewership, and to represent the interests of the local community. Those needs are even more critical, and more necessary, when the media outlet is one such as Sinclair's which uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest.

When large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the individual company's bottom line and less of what we need to educate and inform our democracy and our individual communities. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter to us as community members, and as citizens.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Please take what steps you can to strengthen the rules governing media ownership and limiting, not expanding, the ability of companies to dominate a market. What's at stake is no less than the future of our democratic discourse. Thank you.